

DaimlerChrysler AG

Patent Claims

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1. A safety device (1) for a motor vehicle having a driver's seat (3) whose sitting position can be adjusted by means of a seat adjustment drive (2), and having a steering wheel (5) whose steering wheel  
10 position can be adjusted by means of a steering wheel adjustment drive (4), characterized in that a control unit (6) is provided which evaluates the data (6) which is relevant for the safety of a driving mode, and actuates the steering wheel adjustment drive (4) with  
15 timing such that, before an anticipated accident event occurs, a movement of the steering wheel (5) into an optimum steering wheel position for the driver in terms of safety equipment is initiated as a function of the current sitting position of the driver's seat (3).

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2. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the optimum steering wheel position in terms of safety equipment is reached before the occurrence of the accident event.

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3. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that an optimum steering wheel position in terms of safety equipment is defined for each sitting position of the driver's seat (3) and  
30 stored in the control unit (6).

4. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the sitting position of the driver's seat (3) is defined by a vertical position of  
35 the driver's seat (3), a longitudinal position of the driver's seat (3), a backrest inclination and/or a seat cushion inclination.

5. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the steering wheel position is defined by a steering wheel column inclination and a steering wheel column longitudinal setting.

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6. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in addition a knee protection device (8) which is related to the driver's seat (3) is actuated by the control unit (6), the knee protection  
10 device (8) being moved into an optimum knee protection position for the driver in terms of safety equipment as a function of the current sitting position of the driver's seat (3).

15 7. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a vehicle occupant classification (9) is provided for the driver's seat (3) so that the setting of the optimum steering wheel position in terms of safety equipment can be carried out additionally as  
20 a function of the vehicle occupant classification (9), in particular as a function of the size and/or the weight of the driver.

8. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1,  
25 characterized in that the data (7) which is relevant for the safety of the driving mode comprises driving state variables, ambient data and/or evaluated driver activities.

30 9. The safety device (1) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that when the accident event does not occur the steering wheel (5) is moved back again into its original steering wheel position.